1: Fitzgerald H-5 (1937-1938) AE3 Sino-Tibetan
Border Peoples AE3

gifts are exchanged, and the quarrel is appeased. But when the abduction takes place the girl's father is bound in honour to call out his male relations and retainers and start a pursuit. This has all the appearance of a serious chase, the pursuers are armed with swords or firearms, and travel fast, enquiring after the runaways as they go, while the latter try to avoid main tracks and frequented ways. One is constantly told that if the pursuers overtook them a fight would follow and the seducer would be in danger of his life, and the girl in danger of being dragged home to face the wrath, and possible violence of her father. All the same one may doubt this romantic assertion.

It does not appear, in fact, that the Min Chia Lochinvars are ever brought to bay. In spite of the difficulty of escaping in a country where roads are few and mountain barriers make detours almost impossible, the erring couples always seem to get away. This is the more odd as a Min Chia girl, though she has not got bound feet, can hardly be expected to travel much faster than her male relatives, lightly loaded and hurrying in pursuit. But how embarrassing it would be for all parties if the pursuit was successful! The relatives would be forced, from "face", to fight, perhaps even to kill, the seducer of one of their womenfolk. That would mean not only an unpleasant feud with his family, but also the death of the only person who could now be expected, indeed, required, to marry the girl. No Min Chia father wants a girl returned to him, her honour lost, her marriage cancelled, and the only man who could take her off his hands, dead. On the other hand, provided the seducer escapes, and a decent show of pursuit is made, all can be settled, if not for the best, at least on tolerable conditions.

The parents of the boy to whom the girl was betrothed have to be soothed and perhaps compensated for the loss of face their son has undergone in being so manifestly scorned

1: Fitzgerald H-5 (1937-1938) AE3 Sino-Tibetan
Border Peoples AE3

582 by his intended. But they can usually be consoled by some diplomatic relative who can point out that really they are well out of it, for such a girl would clearly not have made a good daughter-in-law. The youth himself has of course to settle matters with his own family. They will probably be more concerned to placate the family of the girl to whom he is betrothed, justifiably indignant at the neglect of their own daughter and anxious about her future. Sometimes the boy will have to marry both to settle matters amicably, his betrothed as first wife, his love as concubine. This may seem ideal to the parents, but is hardly a promising arrangement
582 for future domestic peace. On the other hand the family of
626 the abducted girl can insist that marriage does in fact take place. Cases where the girl is seduced and abandoned are so rare that I was not able to hear of one. Here, at length, the law could be invoked if necessary, and the seducer, in danger of going to gaol for two or three years, would certainly prefer marriage even if his passion was cold.

In practice it is never necessary to bring things to this point. The law is never invoked, and not being called upon to act, the officials take no steps, even when the facts are well known, the subject of gossip on all sides, and the offender and his would-be bride living at hand within easy
626 reach. No one wants the law and its officers poking their
824 noses into private business. Even the well known fact that armed men were afoot, and a breach of the peace likely, does not rouse the police to action. If manslaughter were done, a reluctant government would be forced to take action, but it is fairly plain that no one expects this to happen. Thus in civil disputes, and even in criminal cases where the motive is not robbery or banditry, the government remains passive and the law is allowed to slumber. The Chinese government, whatever the theory of the reformers, is in practice still actuated by the Taoist principle of "non-

1: Fitzgerald H-5 (1937-1938) AE3 Sino-Tibetan
Border Peoples AE3

for this patrilineal group bearing the same surname. They have borrowed the word from the Chinese, and now use it to denote people of the same surname who are known to be related, but it is a Chinese concept, and does not play an active part in their social organisation.

To the Min Chia it is the village, not the kin group, which is the fundamental social unit above the family. People living in the same village, no matter what surname they bear, jointly revere a common "ancestor" or more strictly, "founder", known as the *Ber Dser*, the "Original Ancestor", who is the reputed founder of the settlement. In Min Chia villages, where there may be as many as two hundred families, or as few as forty, three or four surnames are the rule, and no villages inhabited only by one *tsu*, common in Chinese districts, are found. In consequence of this the type of village name common in most parts of China, such as Chang Chia T'sun "village of the Chang Family" are never found in the Min Chia districts, where names such as "Chicken Village" or other descriptive names are usual. While the *Ber Dser*, the Founder, is often said to be the ancestor of one of the families living in the village, this is not necessarily the case, the worship paid to him is thus not ancestor worship, but the cult of a Genius Loci, open to all the inhabitants and not the special duty of one family.

The *tsu* or patrilineal group is not important to the Min Chia because they do not practise exogamy, and the *tsu* is thus shorn of its main function. When it is remembered that to the Chinese marriage with one of the same surname, even when no relationship can be traced, is strictly forbidden, the wide difference in Min Chia custom is apparent, for the Min Chia not only marry members of families with the same surname as themselves, but also paternal cousins of the same generation. Since the primary function of the surname among the Chinese is to locate the individual in his or

1: Fitzgerald H-5 (1937-1938) AE3 Sino-Tibetan
Border Peoples AE3

her *tsu* and prevent any possibility of endogamy, and since the Min Chia surnames for the most part appear to be Chinese in origin, it is an open question whether the use of surnames by this people is not a comparatively recent consequence of contact with the Chinese. It is true that the Min Chia pronounce their names in a way very strange to Chinese ears. The common surname which a Min Chia writes as Wang, using the character employed by the Chinese, is pronounced Wa, since the Min Chia language has no final *ng*. But when, as in the case of the name Ch'en, the Min Chia pronounce it Tso, one may be inclined to doubt whether this is really the Chinese word at all, and not perhaps a Min Chia surname conventionally written in Chinese with the character for Ch'en.

The Min Chia social structure is therefore really a combination of territorial units, the village, worshipping a common *Ber Dser* or Founder, and kin groups in which the family rather than the Chinese *tsu* is the unit. The family in this sense must be understood as the greater family, or joint family, in which married sons and their children continue to dwell under the paternal roof. This is the ideal, as with the Chinese, but in practice, as the Min Chia themselves admit, it is rarely carried out for a long period. The married sons may in fact live in the parental home for some years, but on the death of the parents they usually divide up the property and set up separate establishments. This indeed, sometimes happens during the lifetime of the parents, when the sons marry, but more often this "division of the family" as it is called, merely means that the young married couple occupy a separate wing of the family house, and there keep a separate establishment. In some cases on marriage the son is given a share of the family land and henceforth manages independently of his parents, and this arrangement is said to be increasingly common. It is perhaps significant of this

1 Fitzgerald ii-5 (1937-1938) AE3 Sino-Tibetan
Border Peoples AE3

596 tendency to divide the great family that in the Min Chia language no distinction is made between the word for family and that for house, both being *hao*. To the Min Chia therefore, one house, one family, is the natural thing, and it is not easy, when asking about the population of a village, to make the distinction, how many houses? and how many families?

582 It might be expected that the fact that the Min Chia do not recognise the Chinese rule of exogamy would prove a barrier preventing intermarriage between the two peoples, but it does not in practice do so. Among the wealthier class of Min Chia (those with city connections), few families could be found who are not related to their Chinese neighbours on the distaff side, but even these families who are always well educated by Ta Li standards, and in many ways have assimilated Chinese culture, still not only condone marriage with persons of the same surname of the same *tsu*, but actually contract such marriages. When asked whether this custom is not in fact contrary to Chinese ideas, they will reply that that may be so in other parts of the country, but that "here in Ta Li we have always done so in the past". This being considered an adequate reason for continuing a custom which Chinese from other provinces regard with shocked amazement. The educated Min Chia remain quite unaffected by this attitude on the part of strangers and it is not uncommon to see inscriptions on a tombstone bearing the names of husband and wife of the same surname, inscriptions which scandalise Chinese visitors. The resident Chinese families, who have themselves intermarried with the Min Chia, now accept this custom with an easy toleration, but do not practise it themselves. Thus a Chinese family will accept the daughter of a Min Chia family, although they know that the girl's parents were of the same *tsu*, but they themselves would never give a daughter in marriage to a family of their own surname. This state of affairs is perhaps

1: Fitzgerald H-5 (1937-1938) AE3 Sino-Tibetan
Border Peoples AE3

the consequence of the long and almost complete isolation of the Min Chia districts. Few immigrants came to Ta Li, and very few Ta Li men went out into the larger world beyond the mountains. Now, when a motor road has been made connecting the city both with K'un Ming and Burma, and many refugees of good social status are coming to live in the remote security of the Min Chia country, it may be that opinions will change. The educated Min Chia may find that their failure to conform with Chinese standards of exogamy excites ridicule and contempt, and the custom of marrying paternal cousins, at least, may be abandoned by the wealthier class. It is unlikely however, that such influences will make themselves felt with the peasantry.

The worship of a common *Ber Dser*, or Founder gives a sense of unity to a village in which more than one name group dwells, and the solidarity of the village is further reinforced by institutions which permit the villagers to govern themselves in almost every matter. The government maintains no police force in the rural districts, nor any paid officials. In recent years, as part of the campaign to restore order and suppress banditry, the system known as *Pao Chia*, or "Family Guarantee" was introduced into Yunnan as in other provinces. This system, a modern version of one of the famous reforms of the eleventh century statesman Wang Anshih of the Sung Dynasty, is devised to make the villages responsible for strangers and travellers who come among them and so check the free movement of bandits. Three or four villages are combined to form a unit called a *chu*, an area, over which presides a *chu chang* or district headman, who is appointed by the *Hsien* Magistrate, but is usually also the headman of one of the villages in his *chu*. The headmen of each of these villages are obliged to report to him the movements of strangers and any disturbances which may occur, and he in turn informs the magistrate. Each village is sub-

1: Fitzgerald H-5 (1937-1938) AE3 Sino-Tibetan
Border Peoples AE3

883 462 manners of the men. A girl is perhaps not as unprotected and alone as she seems, for if any young man attempted to insult her or misbehave, the other women present and the older men would at once put a stop to it. The Min Chia, although a lively, talkative and gay people, have an admirable code of public behaviour and an innate sense of decorum.

Girls and women do other heavy work, made possible by the fact that they never had the Chinese custom of foot [482] binding. A large part of the porterage of goods from the lake shore to the city and from Hsia Kuan is done by women and girls, who also do most of the grass cutting on the higher slopes of the mountain. They assist in the handling [533 461] of boats, and in planting rice fields. This work is usually done by a group of girls working together, who beguile the time by singing improvised songs, always using the same traditional tune. The same kind of song, to the same tune with its prolonged falling final note, is sung by boatmen and by grass cutters on the mountain, and, while the tune is always the same the words are made up for the occasion.

582 When a girl is seventeen years old, or a boy nineteen to twenty, the Min Chia consider it time for them to marry. In practice they will already have been betrothed since childhood and the only thing to be decided is the day which, in accordance with the horoscope of the engaged 583 pair, is most suitable and auspicious for the marriage. The betrothal, which is sometimes concluded when the children are quite small, is arranged by a marriage-broker, usually an elderly woman or man acquainted with both families, for the future bride and groom must never meet before the marriage, and it is not considered good taste for the two families to negotiate directly. The marriage-broker receives no fee for his trouble, but he acts as president of the marriage feast, and is usually the kind of person who

The wife of the chief of the Ch'iang at Lifan.

A Ch'iang woman carrying water.

[FACING p.92]

direction of their sorcerers and elders. This, this writer believes, is the most valuable part of the Ch'iang culture.

/10/ Although the material life and the social system of the Ch'iang are more Sinicized, yet we can still find in them some characteristics of the Ch'iang culture. The Ch'iang tribesmen are now mostly farmers, but they have not yet abandoned the habit of "shepherds". It is said that before the Communists' invasion, their pastoral economy was often more important than their agriculture. Judging from the fact that the Ch'iang tribesmen now remain both pastoral and agricultural, we may say that the statement in history books that the Ch'iang tribesmen were either aborigines or immigrants is reliable. They have not changed the custom of "living beside a hill and building houses with stones," nor have they changed their anarchic and classless social order, if this is what is meant by the "non-existence of king-subject and superior-inferior relationships." As to the assertion that "they have no definite family names, some use their father's given names and mother's surnames as their family names," it is also attested by the names of ruined places which were derived from family names, and by the way they adopt their individual names. Economically, the Ch'iang obviously have reached the stage of having family units. Yet, from the standpoint of their custom of working together and their spirit of mutual concern, they retain some habits of the clan age. Also, according to the marriage code, the clan is still a unit in exogamy. (People of the same clan are not allowed to marry each other.)

Nowadays a Ch'iang village is no longer identical with a clan. There are several different clans in almost every village. (It is said that before the Manchus conquered Ching-ch'uan, there were still some villages with only one clan.) However, each village has its specific local god, sorcerers, and festival activities. This is due to the fact that the traditional culture has not changed although the composition of the village population has. There are many cases like this in anthropology. Now let us take a look at the content of the cultural heritage of the Ch'iang tribesmen.

I. Analysis of the Gods Worshiped by the Ch'iang

The Ch'iang are a ghost-and god-worshiping people. They believe that there are gods everywhere, such as family gods, local gods, and the individual or local guardian gods. If divided according to their nature, there are good gods and evil spirits, if classified in

23: Benedict
184, 192, 582, 591, 602, 611, 613, 614, 616, 618, 621

AL1 Southeast Asia
Sino-Tibetan Border Peoples AE3

/For lists of kinship terms, and for excellent and detailed information concerning correlations between kinship terminology, patterns of behavior, and social institutions, see category 601./